possibilities through sustained vigilance and operations against various secessionist and militant organisations in different parts of the country.

Pricing Structure for Foodgrains

*68. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a report has been submitted by the Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP) on the pricing structure for the foodgrains procurement;

(b) the view of the CACP on the policy of staggered purchases with a graduated price structure for the foodgrains procurement; and

(c) the policy being followed at present by the Food Corporation of India and the extent to which it is in line with the report of CACP?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The CACP in its report on Price Policy for Rabi crops of 1995-96 season expressed the view that a system of staggered procurement with graduated price structure would not only create more distortions in marketing and pricing system but would also make food management more difficult and costly in the medium term. The Government had agreed with the observations of the CACP and decided that only the minimum support prices be announced.

(c) The Food Corporation of India (FCI) procures foodgrains (wheat, paddy and coarsegrains) from the farmers at the minimum support prices announced by the Central Government. All the foodgrains conforming to the prescribed specifications offered for sale by farmers at specified centres are brought by the FCI in close collaboration with State Governments and their procuring agencies. The producers have option to sell their produce to FOI/State agencies at support price or in the open market as is advantageous to them. The rice is collected by way of statutory levy on rice millers and rice dealers. The percentage of levy is fixed by State Governments.

Open Market Sales of Wheat and Rice

69. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRA REDDY :
DR. M. JAGANNATH :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) the details of discretionary powers exercised by the officials of Food Corporation of India for open market sales of wheat and rice;

(b) whether open auctions for its stocks at various depots are not held;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government propose to introduce open market sales scheme; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) While the policy matters like the prices, ceilings on open sale of Wheat and Rice (Domestic) are decided by the Government, operational matters such as Statewise releases are fixed by the FCI. A three-member committee headed by SRM, Food Corporation of India (FCI) decides the names of purchasers alongwith the quantity of wheat to be sold to the purchasers in a month.

(b) and (c). FCI does not conduct open auctions for its stocks at various depots. Open sale of Wheat and Rice is undertaken, interalia, to exert a sobering influence on the market prices without jeopardising the Public Distribution System. On relevant/practical consideration Government has decided to undertake open sale of Wheat and Rice on prices above the Central Issue Price but below the FCI's economic cost.

(d) and (e). Open Market Sales Scheme for domestic use for Wheat and Rice is already in vogue since October, 1993 and January, 1994 respectively.

Irregularities in NDMC

*70. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the accounts of NDMC have not been audited for over the last four years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the action taken to audit the accounts of all the Departments of NDMC and to lay the findings thereof on the table of the House; and

(d) the position of audit vis-a-vis MCD?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : (a) and (b). The Concurrent Audit Party has been over the years conducting the audit of accounts of various deptts./units of the NDMC under the overall supervision of the Examiner, Local Fund Account, Delhi Administration but there has been a delay in the preparation of annual audit reports. The last annual audit report was issued in 1989 and this pertained to the year 1985-86. The Examiner, Local Fund Account has attributed this delay, inter alia, to the shortage of staff.

(c) Consequent upon the enactment of the New Delhi Municipal Council Act, 1994, a Chief Auditor has been appointed recently under section 33 of the said Act. The Chief Auditor is charged with the statutory responsibility of examining and auditing the accounts of the Council and is required to deliver to the Council.